



Left, Mrs. Judy Kozal, wife of retired Col. Richard Kozal, is doing an exercise that requires balancing with the help of parallel support beams while Lt. Col. Jim Vakos, 99th Medical Group, monitors her improvement. Above, Airman 1st Class Christopher Sampson is assisting Senior Airman Ronnie Shirley, who dips his arm in a paraffin solution. After dipping his arms, they are wrapped. The heat from the melted wax helps heal sore muscles.

Right, Senior Airman Hollie Long, 99th Medical Group, is using the "big green ball" as a tool to help build and strengthen the muscles in her abdomen.



Photos by Airman 1st Class Ashley Sorrels

Physical therapy: Good for what ails you

**By Ms. Monique Staskiewicz
AWFC Public Affairs**

After a long day of work, a person may feel a little twinge in the lower back. If it persists, a doctor may recommend physical therapy.

For persons recovering from chronic pain, an injury or even surgery, the 99th Medical Group has health care services available at the Physical Therapy Clinic.

"Physical therapy is to restore function," said Capt. Judy Martell, 99th MDG physical therapist. "Within the military, we are making sure the troops are in good shape to accomplish their mission."

The physical therapy clinic is located in Mike O'Callaghan Federal Hospital and will be celebrating National Physical Therapy Month in October.

The clinic is staffed daily with three physical therapists and six technicians. The clinic also provides wound care and a private area for pain management.

"We match the exercises to the injury and teach patients how to rehabilitate without re-injuring themselves," said Capt. Martell.

The clinic has about 45 patients daily who come in for evaluations and follow-up treatments.

"Most of our patients are referred to us. We work very closely with physicians, orthopedics, family practice and internal medicine," said Capt. Martell.

A therapist will show the patient how the injury occurred and how to get well by using rehabilitation techniques.

"We ask our patients what their goal is so that they have

a desired level of achievement," said Capt. Martell. "We don't establish goals for them; patients establish their own goals. We put the responsibility on the patients. Successful physical therapy depends on how hard the patient works."

"Sometimes people come to us too late," said Staff Sgt. Mishael Alonso, 99th MDG. "The person may be in good physical shape and think that the pain will just go away. Joint problems do not go away on their own, so I recommend going to a doctor first to see how severe the injury is and make sure you don't go untreated if there is pain."

If an active duty member feels that the injury is job related, the clinic has an ergonomics team that does on-site evaluations to determine the cause of injury.

"Our ergonomics team assesses different muscular-skeletal injuries or potential injuries at job sites. We will go out there and see if it is unsafe habits the active duty person has or it may be the job site that needs modifications," said Capt. Martell. "After reviewing, we can then make our recommendations to prevent another injury."

"Usually we receive injuries that require minimal physical therapy," said Senior Airman Hollie Long, 99th MG. "I work with a lot of knee injuries and the recovery rate is around three months. The clinic gives home programs to patients after their in-house program is over."

The clinic has set up different programs to benefit Nellis for the month of October including a 5K run Oct. 31 starting at 6:30 a.m. at the Sports and Fitness Center. Family Practice, Orthopedics and Physical Therapy Clinic will also have a volleyball competition. For more information, call the clinic at 653-3100.



Lt. Col. Mike Flynn, Range Management Office, is receiving a treatment called iontophoresis from Senior Airman Hollie Long, 99th Medical Group. This therapy treats pain and soreness with an electronic current instead of injections.